

University of Mississippi
eGrove

Honors Theses

Honors College (Sally McDonnell Barksdale
Honors College)

2018

Exploring Announcement Dynamics in Select Republican Primary Elections

Mitchell Redd

University of Mississippi. Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/hon_thesis



Part of the [Political Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Redd, Mitchell, "Exploring Announcement Dynamics in Select Republican Primary Elections" (2018). *Honors Theses*. 714.
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/hon_thesis/714

This Undergraduate Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College (Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College) at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

Exploring Announcement Dynamics in Select Republican Primary Elections

by

Mitchell Redd

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of Mississippi in partial
fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College

Oxford

May 2018

Approved by

Advisor: Professor Charles E. Smith, Jr.

Reader: Professor Robert D. Brown

Reader: Professor Miles T. Armaly

©2018

Mitchell Redd

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Abstract

This thesis is a reflection of my general interests in intra-partisan electoral conflict. Empirically, my study is motivated by Aaron King's (2017) theory about the relationship between announcement timing in U.S. Senate primary contests and experience in the arena of federal elections. I develop a measure that credits candidates with the highest score if they are an incumbent Senator, then three lower scores ranging from higher office to no experience. I then examine how this measure relates to the timing of candidacy announcements inside nine upcoming Republican primary contests for U.S. Senate nominations. I test two, tentative hypotheses about how these measures fit together across all of the data I have gathered, and find some support for one of them. However, my thesis is largely inductive, embracing the aim of explaining the contexts of both recent trends in Republican party primary politics – the present (2018) election's Bannon insurgency and the pre-Trump era's Tea Party activity.

Contents

1	Introduction	7
2	Defining the Tea Party and Far Right Movements	10
2.1	Characteristics in the Tea Party	10
2.2	Tea Party and Primary Elections	12
3	Theory	14
3.1	Importance of Announcement Time	14
3.2	Importance of Political Experience	15
3.3	Tea Party Candidates' Political Experience and Timing of An- nouncement	17
3.4	Select states with Bannon's candidates: Political Experience and Timing	18
4	Research methods	20
4.1	Candidate's Timing	20
4.2	Correlation and Measurement	22
5	Electoral History of the Tea Party and State-by-State Analysis of Bannon Candidates	24
5.1	Tea Party Victories and Loses for the Senate in Recent Elections . .	24
5.1.1	2010	24
5.1.2	2012	24
5.1.3	2014	25
5.1.4	2016	26
5.2	Select States and Steve Bannon's Candidates	27
5.2.1	Alabama	27
5.2.2	Arizona	30
5.2.3	Mississippi	34
5.2.4	Nebraska	38

5.2.5	Nevada	39
5.2.6	Tennessee	42
5.2.7	Utah	44
5.2.8	West Virginia	47
5.2.9	Wyoming	49
6	Data and Analysis	51
6.1	Difference of Means	51
6.2	Hypotheses Concerning Tea Party Candidates	52
6.3	Hypotheses Concerning 2018 Republican Candidates	55
7	Conclusions	57
8	List of References	60

List of Figures

1	Timing Calculation	22
2	Average Announcement Rates in the Tea Party Primaries by Ex- perience	51
3	Average Announcement Rates in the 2018 Primaries	52
4	Timing and Political Experience in the Tea Party Primaries	53
5	Timing and Years of Experience in the Tea Party Primary Efforts .	54
6	Timing and Political Experience in the 2018 Primaries	55
7	Timing and Years of Experience in the 2018 Primaries	56

List of Tables

1	Levels of Candidate Experience	20
2	Alabama Senate	29
3	Arizona Senate	32
4	Mississippi Senate	37
5	Mississippi Senate Special	37
6	Nebraska Senate	39
7	Nevada Senate	41
8	Tennessee Senate	42
9	Utah Senate	46
10	West Virginia Senate	49
11	Wyoming Senate	50

1 Introduction

Being a member of a political party does not always come with security. Candidates face challenges from within their own party, whether they are an incumbent or seeking office for the first time. Within Republican politics, the primary process became more focused and energized when the Tea Party movement emerged as a dominant voice in 2010. This movement supported numerous candidates in primary elections to oust sitting incumbents and other centrist politicians. The movement witnessed mixed results, but certainly created memorable conflict within the party.

In the 2016 primary elections, the presence and endorsements of Tea Party groups declined, and the movement largely fell in line with the Trump presidential campaign. However, Steve Bannon is the leader and instigator of a conservative, Tea Party revival in the 2018 Republican primaries. Bannon served as the White House chief strategist and was the executive chair of conservative leaning Breitbart News. Towards the end of 2017, he expressed determination to run his own slate of insurgent candidates by creating a donor network. No one is safe, he said in interview (Bradner 2017). Thus far, he has recruited about ten Senate candidates in states with a centrist, Republican incumbent or vulnerable incumbent Democrat.

Tea Party and Bannon-backed candidates were willing to go against the status quo and create conflict within their own party. They are undoubtedly ambitious in their endeavors, given that peripheral movements in major parties are less influential, as contrasted to party leaders and elites. King wrote that candidates for U.S. Senate need tremendous momentum and resources to gain recognition

from the electorate, much less become elected (2017: 23). In this thesis, I set out to determine if Tea Party and Bannon-backed insurgents are living up to that demand by examining when they enter a Senate primary race. Literature has established that candidates for the Senate increase their chances by entering a race early and competing for money and endorsements before another candidate does. With rewards like these attached to the timing of announcement, ambitious candidates must act accordingly and wisely should they be a serious contender. While this holds true, candidates must also account for their level of political prowess and base their choice of when to enter the Senate race off of how experienced they are on the campaign.

The two qualities of experience and timing bear significance in the campaign, and this study will examine the relationship between the two among previous Tea Party candidates and current 2018 candidates. Within this rationale, my first research question asks if there is a relationship between a Tea Party candidate's level of political experience and the timing of their announcement. The second question expands by asking if there is a relationship between Republican primary candidates' political experience and their time of announcement in select states that Steve Bannon is influencing. Both political experience and the timing of candidacy are integral issues to a campaign for the Senate and I hope to detail the presence or absence of a relationship among the two classes of candidates.

To determine the existence of a relationship between the two characteristics, I draw from Aaron King's theory that political experience and timing of announcement are related to one another. In King's work, he theorizes that the more experienced will announce earlier, and the less experienced will announce later. He does give consideration and evidence that certain circumstances will cause the opposite, but that most candidates will follow that trend. I developed two hypotheses to test how these measures fit together across the experience levels and announcement times of 2010-2016 Tea Party candidates and 2018 Republican Senate candidates. The findings indicate support for both hypotheses, with stronger

support found among the pool of Tea Party candidates.

Starting with Chapter Two, I define what Tea Party movements are and the main goals and characteristics of the movement while also providing literature concerning why the primary election is the arena for this conflict. In Chapter Three, the theoretical basis is expanded upon and the reasoning for the expected relationship is further explained in the context of political experience. Chapter Four provides the research methods and way in which timing of announcement is obtained. Chapter Five fulfills two roles: first, I describe the Tea Party's activity in four election years and how the movement fared holistically. Secondly, an analysis of each state Bannon threatened is provided, along with the experience levels and time scores for all 2018 candidates. Chapter Six provides an overview of the data with an analysis of the findings from Tea Party candidates and those candidates in the 2018 elections. Lastly, Chapter Seven concludes with suggestions for further research and broader implications.

2 Defining the Tea Party and Far Right Movements

Late in 2009, an excellent opportunity for outburst presented itself. CNBC reporter Rick Santelli lamented the new Obama administration's foreclosure relief plan in a rant that went on air. He exclaimed, "The government is rewarding bad behavior" with regard to a minor homeowner bailout plan (Perlberg 2014). While Santelli was not a politician, he declared the concerns of many citizens who would later partake in the Tea Party movement. The rant was an important part of starting the Tea Party tidal wave and the clip rapidly scaled the media tower. The clip caused such a fuss that White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs had to address it, which inflamed the issue even more. Soon after, a movement that symbolizes "American Patriotism" would be born as a resistance to the direction of the country and Republican party. This section will seek to introduce the Tea Party and detail its conflict within the G.O.P.

2.1 Characteristics in the Tea Party

Although the Tea Party struggled in the past few years and saw its role change with the introduction of candidate and later nominee President Trump, recent studies describe the movement as the most important base within the Republican Party (Foley 2012). Even when the Tea Party suffered widespread losses in the 2014 midterms, they still retained their influence in the party. Throughout much of 2015, the Tea Party aligned House members and conservative Freedom Caucus members caused trouble in John Boehner's Republican agenda, so much that he frequently relied on Democratic votes to pass legislation. By forcing Boehner's

hand enough times and disrupting the House, they wrestled control of his own caucus away from him and forced his resignation from office (Bash 2015). The Tea Party and other far-right causes may never win the White House, but they remain active enough to disrupt mainstream Republican goals and present themselves as a transformative voice within the party.

A source of conflict in the Tea Party literature is that Republicans fear GOP safe seats are in harm's way when a far-right challenger achieves victory in a Republican primary. This occurred several times early in the Tea Party movement, such as Sharon Angle's victory in the 2010 Nevada GOP primary, but loss to former Sen. Harry Reid. Richard Murdock during the 2012 Indiana Senate election is another example. He won the GOP nomination, but made incendiary comments about rape culture and lost to Democrat Joe Donnelly. The Republican Party was suffering from intra-party fighting that was costing them seats they could otherwise win in the U.S. Senate. Oppositely, there are victories for the Tea Party, such as Dave Brat's 2014 victory over Eric Cantor in one of Virginia's Congressional primaries (Hood, Kidd, and Morris 2015). These are just a few instances that drive mainstream Republicans and their donors in an endeavor to squash and fight off challenges from the right.

There is also scholarship published concerning where the Tea Party belongs. They levied an all-out war with mainstream Republican lawmakers during their intense period of 2010 to 2014, but still maintained a Republican identification. Professors David E. Campbell and Robert D. Putnam found that the most distinct and powerful characteristic of a Tea Party supporter is their Republican identification (2011). Democracy Corp found that 86% of Tea Party supporters and activists identify or lean to the Republican Party. (Greenburg 2010). The people that become involved are often not political newcomers and neophytes, but they were most likely to call government officials and be involved before the Tea Party made headlines with their 2010 victories. They were already highly partisan Republicans, and "whatever their concern about particular Republican elites,

Tea Party participants are right-wingers in a GOP orbit“ (Skopol and Williamson 2012).

We can firmly establish that Tea Party supporters are Republicans and conservative, but what makes them different from “the establishment“? What pushes them to the point of declaring intra-party war? “Establishment Republicans“ can be used to refer to any Republican that does not identify with the Tea Party movement. Both groups align over the same issues in a “most important problem“ index. Both groups see the economy and jobs as the most significant problem, and all other categories are equal. Essentially, the priorities for each group mirror one another (Hood, Kidd, and Morris 2015: 929). What makes them so different to warrant internal party fighting? The approaches taken to address problems is where differences begin to surface. To combat the problem of the federal budget, Tea Party supporters are more willing to cut spending than their Establishment counterparts, while both groups are staunchly opposed to increasing taxes. There are also two ordinal level measures that provide an angle from which the two groups differ, which are ideology and party identification. In Hood and McKee’s survey sample, 69% of Tea Party supporters identify as “very conservative,“ whereas only 41.6% of Establishment Republicans fall in that category. Along party lines, 69% percent of Tea Party supporters are a “strong Republican,“ whereas 53.6% of Establishment Republicans fall in that category. Although the two measures are ordinal levels, this gives a picture of how the two groups differ at the surface level.

2.2 Tea Party and Primary Elections

In the U.S., we maintain a two-party system. However, other nations can have up to five major parties that hold seats in their legislative body, such as Germany and France. To differentiate, the U.S. governance and design of the Electoral College does not bode well for any third-party movement. In U.S. Senate elections, the party primaries take precedence. In the U.S. presidential elections, party primaries take precedence. In Germany, the far-right party Alternate for Germany

(AfD) currently holds 92 seats in the Bundestag, the German parliament. Similarly, the French nationalist party National Front maintains 18 seats in the French parliament. The American Tea Party, however, does not have the same mobility.

This lack of mobility to live and breathe on its own, independently, is one reason the Tea Party is a Republican movement. They mirror the major goals of the Republican Party, such as jobs and the economy and share other demographic attributes (Hood, Kidd, and Morris 2015: 930). However, to achieve the goals that are distinct from the Republican Party, working within the party as a transformative force is their only option. If the Tea Party were to branch out and begin a third-party movement, it would likely be met with more hostility and misfortune. The movement is more than a simple “rebranding” act (Foley 2012; Skopol and Williamson 2012: 76), but it is carefully coordinated movement to dramatically change the people and ways of the Republican Party.

Given the overview of the Tea Party’s key differences and relationship to the Republican Party, we can establish a connection between them and the Republican primary system. Movements can gain attention. They can propagate. They can receive airtime, money, and persuade others of their ideas. But, all these actions are not the pinnacle of the movement. The pinnacle of the movement is to achieve change. Such change happens when individuals are placed in an environment in which they have the power to enact their preferences and wishes into public policy. Since the Tea Party is confined to the Republican Party, they must compete within this setting. Hood writes: “There is little question that the principal institutional mechanism for the exercise of the Tea Party influence on national politics (and the Republican Party) is through the primary ballot” (2015: 927). If they do not have the ability to win primary elections or cannot win them at all, they lack the ability to influence the Republican Party. Therefore, the Tea Party and Bannon’s insurgents must compete in this setting.

3 Theory

The major theory and expectations develop from Aaron King’s work, *Unfolding Ambition in Senate Primary Elections*. Writ-large, the author uses the timing of a candidate’s announcement as the measure of ambition for the U.S. Senate. When the 114th Congress began in January 2015, all Senators up for re-election in 2016 already knew whether they intended to seek re-election or seek other plans. Many moving parts occur during the course of a campaign, and wise timing is required to catch the parts needed for ambition to come to fruition. However, strategic timing is not a silver bullet for success, as many politicians well timed their entry into a race and lost. King writes: “it is important to note strategically timing candidacy decisions will not always lead to a victory; rather, it is an attempt to maximize the probability of success” (84). Candidates with high degrees of political experience and those with less experience announce at different times, but nonetheless, their experience is intersecting with the time at which they enter a race. That intersectionality is central to this thesis and its attention to the Tea Party and 2018 elections.

3.1 Importance of Announcement Time

Benefits accompany declaring for a race at an early date. When a candidate is interested in higher office, they assess resources, influence, cash-on-hand, and any other source that could boost their chances of election. To the candidate’s detriment, the resources available are not continuous and decline with each passing day (King 2017: 24). A candidate most needs money, organizational staff, and

endorsements. The longer a candidate prolongs announcing the campaign, the less likely of a chance they have in dipping into those key resources. King found that political fundraising is strongly correlated with a candidate's decision to announce candidacy (87). Fundraising is often key to running a successful campaign, and King found that candidates who declare their candidacy earlier receive more money. The time at which one enters a race is tied to several key variables which increase the likelihood of success. Second to increasing the odds of oneself winning, they are decreasing the odds that more opponents would emerge. If a candidate enters a race and generates funds and attention immediately, they could deter others who would run if that candidate were otherwise absent (Goodliffe 2001).

In King's work and for the purposes of this project, the timing announcement is not alone. In an examination of the Tea Party and Bannon candidates, the announcement decision will intersect with the candidate's level of political experience. While declaring at an earlier rate will provide a higher likelihood of resource gathering, candidates vary on their announcement time when their level of political experience is assessed.

3.2 Importance of Political Experience

The second quality under consideration is political experience. Seasoned candidates are often much more capable of running a successful campaign and winning elections (King 2017). Incumbents and statewide elected officials are adept at fundraising and generating the attention a Senate campaign needs, whereas state politicians and local officeholders lack the name recognition and the funds to maintain as great of a likelihood for success. King writes, "Differences in electoral experience lead potential candidates to have asymmetric influence over one another. Using this information, one can make predictions about when certain individuals will announce their candidacy decisions" (23). Political experience also contributes to a candidate's profile they maintain with voters. Politicians and voters are often most familiar with the office that a candidate currently holds

or their most significant public office prior to running for the Senate (King 2017: 64). This most recent office held will suggest when a candidate should announce. High quality candidates, such as incumbents and statewide office holders, have an incentive to enter a race early and ward off other candidates. Oppositely, lower level candidates should delay their announcement to increase their likelihood of winning. They cannot compete for resources with politicians that are more well-known and can better see the full slate of candidates if they declare closer to the filing deadline (King 2017: 89).

Some candidates for Senate do not amass as much political experience. They are known as low-quality candidates. Ideally, they should decide early since they are not well known and hold less resources. However, they generally wait. They hold less resources and must use them sparingly. By delaying a choice, low-quality candidates are increasing their upward mobility. While others declare for the Senate, they often are vacating offices. This provides time for a low experience candidate to scout his options and take the low hanging fruit if deemed more desirable and achievable than a Senate seat. While they are ambitious for the Senate, that ambition can often spill over into other offices. Additionally, low-quality candidates have more uncertainty with less funds and lower name recognition. While entering a race early is the overall best option, candidates lack a high degree of certainty because the full display of candidates has yet to form. By announcing later, low-quality candidates trim the level of uncertainty by knowing their competition.

The timing of the 2018 primary candidates' announcements relative to their experience is central to the discussion of this thesis. However, experience does not give a full description and its drawbacks are duly noted. First, sometimes the political climate disregards and despises experience. In 2010's Tea Party wave and during the 2016 presidential campaign, experience was not valued and voters lost confidence in a politician's institutional insight. Secondly, qualifications can increase the chances of winning, but a candidate's visibility must come first. Most

candidates get recognized because they are known, not because of their qualifications (Fenno, 1978). The 1978 Democratic primary for New Jersey's Senate seat illustrates this. Richard Leone served as the appointed New Jersey state treasurer and managed two governor's campaigns. Overall, he was a top scholar in the state concerning finance and had the resume to prove it. He was a high-quality candidate, with regard to experience. However, Bill Bradley was also in the race. He was a Rhodes Scholar and played in the NBA with the Knicks, which usually does not fit with politics. To the contrary, his pre-political activities gave him visibility and attractiveness that Leone could not attain. In the end, Bradley bested Leone 61% - 21%. Thus, candidate's decision timing will be evaluated alongside their political experience, but some candidate's also have the ability to achieve a style of "stardom," whether or not they are famous.

The two research questions I asked from Chapter One directly relate to these two qualities: a candidate's political experience and the time at which they announce their candidacy. Two hypotheses that deal with these variables will be presented as pertaining to the Tea Party candidates from 2010-2016 and the current states in which Steve Bannon has endorsed a candidate.

3.3 Tea Party Candidates' Political Experience and Timing of Announcement

Tea Party candidates entered into politics with strong ambition to primary long-time Republican incumbents and other centrist candidates out of political office. Gauging from the rhetoric and money that influenced their campaigns, Tea Party candidates appear to have a great deal of enthusiasm to reach the Senate (Skopol and Williamson 2012, Foley 2012). In this project, the timing at which a candidate declares for a Senate race (i.e. earlier or later) is a reflection of that ambition. The first research question asked if there exists a relationship between a Tea Party member's political experience and the time at which they announce their candidacy. Political experience is expressed in two different manners. The first is

concerning the level of political experience they most recently held. The second express is the total number of years they have in political experience, whether that be elected or unelected experience. By expressing the independent variable in two forms, I am able to see where a candidate is politically, and how much quantifiable experience they have. Those questions are rationalized in the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1a: As Tea Party candidates' most previous political experience increases, their timing of announcement will decrease, or be earlier in the timeline.

Hypothesis 1b: As Tea Party candidates' years of political experience increases, their timing of announcement decreases, or becomes earlier.

3.4 Select states with Bannon's candidates: Political Experience and Timing

The second research question dealt with how Steve Bannon's candidates were affecting the campaigns in select states during the 2018 midterms. Bannon's candidates are in races that have an adversary, either in the form of an incumbent Republican or a vulnerable Democrat. Since a Bannon candidate is present in several races, I hypothesize that this will cause an effect of political experience to correlate with the time of announcement by seeing experience increase by timing of announcement decrease. A serious contender with Bannon and far right support could trigger other candidates to announce their candidacy at an early rate to compete for attention and resources, or they may wait to see how Bannon's candidate will fare in the campaign and form a more certain view of the playing field. Political experience is expressed in the two same way as in the first hypotheses. The second set of hypotheses with regard to the 2018 Republican Senate primaries are listed below.

Hypothesis 2a: As 2018 Republicans' political experience increases, their timing of announcement decreases, becomes earlier.

Hypothesis 2b: As 2018 Republicans' years of political experience increase, their timing of announcement decreases, or becomes earlier.

4 Research methods

4.1 Candidate's Timing

Political experience is treated as the independent variable (X) and the timing of announcement is treated as the dependent variable (Y) across all hypotheses. For both, political experience is expressed in two different ways. First, experience is expressed as an ordinal rank level measure based on the candidates most previously held office. The chart below lists the ranks.

Table 1: Levels of Candidate Experience

Level of Experience	Description
Incumbent	Currently holds the Senate seat
High	Currently or previously held U.S. House, governor, Lt. governor, or statewide office
Low	Currently or previously held state Senate, state House or local office
None	Never held elected office

The second expression of political experience is obtained by figuring the candidate's total years of political experience. Initially, the variable was based on solely elected office experience, but candidates can also boost their image and name recognition by working in jobs that are not elected offices. For example, many candidates lack an elected office, but are well known from chairing a presi-

dential campaign or being heavily involved with the state Republican Party. So, the variable includes any years of political experience that could potentially aid in the recognition of a campaign.

The dependent variable for both hypotheses is expressed as the timing of candidacy announcement. The complexity in obtaining this score is that each state regulates elections differently, especially regarding the filing deadline. For example, some states conduct a primary in March, whereas the most common primary occurs in June. Additionally, some states maintain a distinct filing period. This means that a candidate may announce for office at any given time, but they may only officially file during a two-week period.

Several factors are incorporated when determining the candidate's decision timing. First, January 1 of the year prior to the election year is the beginning of the timeline. For example, the beginning of the timeline for the 2018 primary elections is January 1, 2017. The only pitfall with setting the beginning date in this manner is that some candidates make a choice about their campaign before that time. For example, Roger Wicker of Mississippi filed for his 2018 bid in 2013. However, in King's examination of 611 primary elections over a twenty-year period, 97% of decisions were made after January 1 of the year prior to the election year (2017). A very small number fell outside of that and a uniform variable is needed to compare each candidate's timing of entry into the race. On the other hand, the end of the timeline is the filing deadline for the primary. Most deadlines fall around late March and early April of the year the election will take place.

So, after acquiring the filing deadline for each state under consideration by scouring state secretary of state websites and news articles, I located the time at which the candidate announced the campaign. This involved contacting some candidates directly, searching the news, and searching records kept by state parties. When that date is obtained, I assigned each candidate a score between zero and one-hundred. A candidate with a score of 0 filed for election on the first day it was made available, or in Mr. Wicker's case, before January 1 of the preceding

Figure 1: Timing Calculation

$$\frac{\textit{Date of decision} - \textit{Beginning of timeline}}{\textit{Filing deadline} - \textit{Beginning of timeline}}$$

year. A candidate that filed for election on the filing deadline would receive a 100. And a candidate that filed halfway between the two dates gets a score of 50. All candidates received this figure and were placed on a timeline with all the other candidates in their respective primary. While simplifying the date of entry to a standardized variable, it could detract from the environment of each state, as filing dates are almost never the same. However, having a standardized variable provides a way to quickly compare the differences in two or more candidates, especially when the experience level is viewed alongside it. The numerical value for each date is obtained using a date-to-number tool R Studio produces. Then the beginning date is subtracted from the decision-making date. The bottom of the fraction is the beginning date subtracted from the filing deadline. Using the numerical values for the dates yields a value between 0 and 1, which effectively represents how far along was the candidate's decision was in the overall timeline.

4.2 Correlation and Measurement

Two correlations were obtained for each hypothesis. In the first correlation for Hypothesis 1, the independent variable of political experience is expressed in ranks of 1) No experience, 2) Low quality, 3) High quality, 4) Incumbency. It was then correlated with the announcement times for all Tea Party candidates from 2010 to 2016. A Spearman's Rho non-parametric correlation was used to measure the strength of association between the two variables and the direction of the variables. In the second correlation for Hypothesis 1, political experience was still utilized as the independent variable, but instead of using an ordinal level scale to determine

experience, years of political experience were used and correlated with the same data for Tea Party announcement times. A Pearson's correlation was used since both the variables were interval for the second correlation of Hypothesis 1. Secondly, the data for select 2018 midterm states with a Bannon candidate's presence was correlated to determine the variable's strength of association for Hypothesis 2. In this correlation, 2018 Republican primary candidates' political experience was expressed in ordinal level ranks identical to the ranks in first hypothesis. These measurements were then correlated with the 2018 candidates' announcement times using a Spearman's Rho correlation. In the second correlation, political experience was alternatively expressed as years of political experience and correlated with 2018 candidates announcement times using a Pearson's correlation, since both independent and dependent variables are interval in this correlation.

5 Electoral History of the Tea Party and State-by-State Analysis of Bannon Candidates

After examining the characteristics and environment for Tea Party candidates, this section will detail the record of Tea Party candidates in their Senate elections from 2010 to 2016 and provide a state-by-state view of all the candidates declared for nine states and ten elections in which Steve Bannon threatened the status quo.

5.1 Tea Party Victories and Loses for the Senate in Recent Elections

5.1.1 2010

Although the Republicans gained control of the House in the 2010 midterms, they did not gain control of the Senate in that cycle. Understandably, the Senate is a much more difficult chamber to undergo partisan change, and sometimes takes two to three cycles to change the majority. However, this does not negate the losses the Tea Party endured in that cycle. On the one hand, Tea Party endorsed candidates performed wonderfully in the primaries; of the nine candidates in the 2010 Senate cycle, only one candidate lost in the primary. However, only four of the candidates managed to win in the general election. The primary victories were enough to keep the momentum going into the next cycle, but also enough for Republicans to doubt Tea Party candidates' electability to the Senate.

5.1.2 2012

With the enthusiasm heading into the 2012 cycle, Tea Party groups supported more candidates. To the contrary of their ambition, many candidates lost in the

primary or simply did not win against the Democratic opponent. For example, establishment candidates with better name recognition were defeated in Michigan and Wisconsin in their respective primaries and Dan Liljenquist lost to Senator Orin Hatch in the Utah primary. As for candidates that won their respective primaries, many of them experienced defeat in the general due to harsh rhetoric or missteps during the campaign. Todd Akin became infamous for his suggestion that victims of “legitimate rape” rarely became pregnant (qtd. in Moore 2012). Richard Mourdock started strong in Indiana by defeating an incumbent in the primary but fumbled by saying that God intends for rape to happen (Groer 2012). On the other hand, the Tea Party victories in this cycle were enough for the movement to stay alive, most notably with Ted Cruz’s defeat of the Texas Lieutenant Governor, which all but sealed his victory in the midterm. Other victories include Jeff Flake, who would ultimately deviate away from the Tea Party in years to come, and Debbie Fischer.

5.1.3 2014

The 2014 cycle was the most interesting in terms of shifts from the two previous election cycles. A strong, well-coordinated response from the establishment wing of the Republican Party held off many “insurgent” candidates, such as Chris McDaniel of Mississippi, Joe Carr of Tennessee, and Mark Bevin of Kentucky. In addition, the types of races also changed. In the two previous cycles, Tea Party movements tried challenging incumbent Republicans in primary elections and Democrats in general elections. They were met with more failure than success. While the challenges to incumbents in 2014 were still met with dismal results, other candidates did, in fact, win races and go to Washington. In six key races, Tea Party movements supported candidates that lacked an incumbent in the primary or there was a Democratic incumbent in the general that was now in a red-turned state. For example, the Tea Party contributed to Tom Cotton’s bid for Senate in Arkansas. Arkansas, along with the rest of the South, had moved in a conservative

direction and any Republican that would challenge David Pryor would win. The Tea Party saw an opportunity with least resistance to support a conservative candidate and did so. Likewise, Dan Sullivan of Alaska received Tea Party support and defeated incumbent Senator Mark Begich in the general election. These two races featured an incumbent, but Tea Party groups perceived an easier race, given that a Republican incumbent was absent the Republican primary.

A telling race is seen in Ben Sasse's Senate campaign in 2014. Mike Johanns announced he would not seek reelection, which made the seat open for both primaries. Sasse received an endorsement from the Tea Party Express, and his main challenger, Shane Osborn, initially received support from FreedomWorks. However, when Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell endorsed Osborn, FreedomWorks pulled their support and gave it to Sasse, instead (Fox 2014). This dynamic is representative of two observations. First, after the Tea Party fared better in races in which there was no powerful, establishment Republican. Secondly, the fundraising dynamic between Ben Sasse and Shannon Osborn shows that the Tea Party is not one, holistic movement that is centralized. Rather, the Tea Party is more akin to a spider web, that is spread out with no organization that routes back to a central authority (Foyle 2012).

5.1.4 2016

The 2016 cycle illustrated the Tea Party's declining power and absorption into the changing scene of presidential politics. Only four credible candidates campaigned as Tea Party candidates: Kelli Ward (AZ), Sharron Angle (NV), John Flemming (LA), and Marlin Stutzman (IN). These four were defeated in the primaries, pointing to this cycle's absence of the Tea Party and realization that the "establishment" Republicans were meeting them in tight races. Several other Tea Party candidates entered the 2016 primaries, but they were incumbents who were supported by the Tea Party in the 2010 election. In this race especially, conservative candidates with no experience entered Senate races. In addition, the Tea

Party was, by circumstance, absorbed into the Trump campaign in 2016 as the Republican Party organized behind him.

The Tea Party impacted Republican politics to such a degree that it eventually elicited a reaction (Kane 2016). The campaign to “crush the Tea Party” as Mitch McConnell put it was highly successful in 2014 by keeping their candidates from winning primaries. While the Tea Party suffered losses, it did learn from its previous cycles to support open and semi-open races, which helped deliver six candidates to the U.S. Senate. Through the movement’s losses and successes, it was still a collection of different Tea Party movements, the structure was never centralized but was spread out like a spider web (Foley 2012). Interestingly enough, the Tea Party still maintained a voice at the grassroots and fundraising levels while the two sometimes maintained different goals and candidate preferences.

5.2 Select States and Steve Bannon’s Candidates

This section will explore the dynamics of eight Republican primaries that lead up to the 2018 midterms. In each section, the candidates are given their decision scores and evaluated based on their level of experience. Additionally, some races feature a retirement, which creates a different type of environment as contrasted to that of an incumbent-present race. The state analysis helps to see each state’s circumstance. Trends do exist, but state environments help to verify those trends, or give good reason as to why frameworks may not work across multiple states.

5.2.1 Alabama

Jeff Session’s appointment to the Department of Justice created a vacancy in the Senate. To fill that seat, a special election was set for December 12, 2017. Interestingly, Alabama law mandates party primaries to occur for their special elections. It was originally slated to coincide with the state’s regularly scheduled election in 2018 by former Governor Robert Bentley. However, Governor Kay Ivey rescheduled the general election for December 12, 2017 and established the

primaries on August 15, 2017, and the primary runoffs on September 26, 2017.

The election in discussion is a special election, but there are key elements of Republican politics. First, the Republican primary featured significant competition between three high-quality candidates. Ideally, more high-quality candidates with ambition for the Senate could have entered (King, 2017). 2017 was not an election year, so they would have nothing to lose save for being away from the desk of their current office. Secondly, a breakdown in Republican politics presented itself. Although three candidates in the primary were high-quality candidates, they each appeal to different coalitions and have different styles of presentation. These coalitions and preferences include moderate Republicanism, Tea Party sentiment, and politics of resisting, which is most notably attached to Roy Moore. The third aspect of the race is the appeal to President Trump, which is an observed variable across all Republican primaries in this thesis. Although the election is decided, certain aspects are akin to the 2018 primary elections and can serve as a point reference.

In Alabama's primary, ten Republicans qualified. Four of the candidates have elected office experience that varies from high-quality to low-quality, and the other six have never held office. Most notably, Mo Brooks is currently a U.S. House member from Alabama. In his 2010 entry to the House and the special election in question, he was a Tea Party favored candidate (Seitz-Wald, 2017). Oppositely, Luther Strange was appointed to the seat by Bentley and was flanked for being a career politician and establishment Republican. He ran unsuccessfully for Lieutenant Governor and was later elected as Attorney General. The third candidate in the race was Roy Moore. With regard to Tea Party and far-right conservative support, Brooks and Moore maintained shares of both coalitions, but Moore retains an audience through his defiance, which makes the Alabama race truly unique. He unsuccessfully ran for governor and was twice-removed from the federal bench. In addition to removal, he maintains a preference of Christianity directing public policy

Since the election was special, the beginning date of the timeline is set at the selection of Jeff Sessions for Attorney General (Johnson, 2016). Even though a candidate could not officially file at this point, beginning the time here is logical, since they could announce a campaign on that date. Thus, the start date is November 18, 2017 and the filing deadline for the primary is May 17, 2017. Below is a table that lists candidates experience levels with their timing scores.

Table 2: Alabama Senate

Candidate	Level of Experience	Time Score
Luther Strange	Incumbent	10
Roy Moore	High	88
Mo Brooks	High	99
Trip Pittman	Low	100
Randy Brinson	None	88
Mary Maxwell	None	99
James Beretta	None	88
Dom Gentile	None	96
Bryan Peeples	None	99
Joseph Breault	None	86

In this race, the candidate largely followed expectation, with less experienced candidates delaying their announcements. Of the higher-quality candidates, Luther Strange was the only candidate to announce immediately after Sessions' appointment. Interestingly, Brooks and Moore were both delayed, despite their experience. At the time, Roy Moore was being removed from his post as Chief Justice by the Alabama Judiciary, and Mo Brooks may have speculated, since he knowingly entered a race with two well-know politicians. The largest mystery when examining the time data is that Luther Strange announced very early in the race, about a month before Bentley picked him as the appointee. Candidates enter races at certain times to maximize the probability of success (King, 2017). For Strange's case, entering early, even before Bentley considered him, was the best choice he could have made, as he fundraised quickly. However, certain decisions on the campaign are not guaranteed to deliver a winning result, but the timing of a decision should maximize the utility they currently possess that will place them closer to winning than otherwise.

In the end, Strange and Moore advanced to the runoff, with Moore earning 39% to Strange's 33%. In the runoff, Moore again bested Strange 55%–45%. Even throughout the campaign, Moore consistently commanded a 10-point lead (Tallfragar Group). Although Strange announced early and lost, he likely maximized his resources by announcing early – which could explain why Bentley picked him as the appointee.

The last analysis of Alabama's Senate election is the presence of President Trump. During the primary, candidates were accusing each other of insufficient loyalty to Trump, and casting themselves as the true Trump supporter. Since Trump won Alabama nearly 2-1, candidates must appeal to this. However, Alabama disrupts this assumption. Trump endorsed both Strange and Moore, but his endorsements were not the victors. This may not exist as the best example, since Moore placed himself in a sexual harassment situation and his record of resisting the federal government earned him popularity. If a presidential endorsement falters in a deep-red state, this could spell disaster for candidates in swing states that earn the president's support. Again, Alabama's Senate election illustrates that expectations concerning decision timing and presidential endorsement will not always accomplish victory, but are purposed to maximize a candidate's utility.

5.2.2 Arizona

Arizona's Senate race is one of the most interesting and exciting races this midterm season. Not only will the Republican primary generate energy, but the general election features a strong, current Democratic House member. In addition, Arizona is not a one-party state. Both of its state parties are healthy and nominate strong contenders for federal elections. Currently, the state is in Republican hands. Since the 1990's, the state has remained in Republican hands, for the most part. John McCain has held a seat in the Senate since 1987 and the House delegation remains red. Yet, the state of Arizona gave its electoral votes to Barrack Obama

in 2008 and 2012. In 2016, the state gave its votes to Donald Trump, but only by a margin of 3.5%. Therefore, Republicans that compete in primary elections must be wary that a strong Democratic challenger often waits for November.

The Arizona Senate race was also complicated by Sen. Jeff Flake's retirement. After publicly clashing with Trump on many votes and fundamentals of Republicanism, Flake announced his retirement. Not only would he have faced a difficult election by running against Democrat Kyrsten Sinema in the general election, but he was polling poorly against far-right candidate Kelli Ward after clashing with Trump. The timing of his retirement announcement is suggestive of an interest in maintaining the majority his party currently maintains (King, 2017), and he is also rumored as a 2020 candidate against Trump. However, the retirement opened the door to a larger and more energetic field.

Although the race is open, the breakdown of far-right and centrist Republicanism is still existent. Kelli Ward was the first candidate to announce. She is a doctor and former state Senator who takes Tea Party positions. Since she recently ran the 2016 primary election against John McCain, she benefits greatly from name recognition (OH Predictive Insights). The most energetic installment of the race is Joe Arpaio. Arpaio has been tagged, "America's toughest sheriff" by ramping up immigration enforcement. Most notably, he established the "tent cities" to house unauthorized immigrants and performed sweeps to round up immigrants and hand them over to Immigration Customs and Enforcement. Additionally, Arpaio was convicted of criminal contempt for disobeying an order to stop detaining immigrants due to lack of legal status. Trump later pardoned him in August 2017. In 2016, Arpaio lost his re-election as sheriff in Maricopa County, which is Phoenix and suburbs, while Trump won Maricopa County.

Lastly, Martha McSally currently serves as the House member for Arizona's second Congressional district. Notably, she was the first female fighter pilot in the U.S. military. She is generally noted as a centrist Republican, but has rhetorically stepped to the right, by telling the Republican Party to "grow a pair of ovaries"

and to stop “dicking around” (Weaver 2018) concerning immigration policy. Since increased negative rhetoric increases with primaries, this is not surprising, especially considering her far-right competition. She has become more open to Trump from the onset of her announcement, despite not supporting him in 2016. Below is a chart that lists the current candidates for the Arizona Republican primary and the dates they announced their candidacy.

Table 3: Arizona Senate

Candidate	Level of Experience	Time Score
Martha McSally	High	73
Joe Arpaio	Low	72
Kelli Ward	Low	0
Craig Brittain	None	52
Christian Diegel	None	61
Michelle Griffin	None	56
Nicholas Tutora	None	42

The most notable time score of the table is Kelli Ward, which indicates that she announced before January 1, 2017. Soon after she lost to John McCain in 2016’s primary, she announced her bid for another Senate run. To the contrary of how most low-quality candidates behave, Ward announced very early. This is a clear indication that she is ambitious in her goal of becoming a Senator. Although she is less experienced politically, she maintained funds and high name recognition from her previous election. When she announced for this Senate race, she did so under the impression that she would compete against Jeff Flake. Quite oppositely, Flake announced his retirement. By taking a gamble as a low-quality candidate and throwing her hat in early, she elevated her status as a prime competitor for the seat against Martha McSally and Joe Arpaio. In addition, she benefits from the media attention. For example, she was the principle far-right challenger before the race began and has equal media attention as compared to McSally and Arpaio. In doing so, she differentiated herself from other low-quality and low experience candidates that announced later.

In relation to the timeline, McSally announced her race late. As a high-quality

candidate, this move was not in her best interest, especially when a far-right challenger announced so quickly and Joe Arpaio announced slightly before her, as well. However, there is candidate strategy that triumphs over her late announcement. John McCain received a brain cancer diagnosis in 2017, which naturally leads to speculation of a retirement before his term is up. McSally likely delayed entrance into the race so that she could announce for John McCain's seat if he were to resign. Running in a special election with her major Republican competition and the strongest Arizona Democrat, Kyrsten Sinema, already in the other Senate race would provide an easier route to the Senate. However, the deadline is May 30 and a McSally's decision already fell at 73% along the timeline. Even though high-quality candidates usually declare early, this case provides a compelling example that candidates are also considering alternation options and delay making a commitment to explore or wait on those opportunities.

Retirements are also key to understanding Senate primaries, especially if they happen during the middle of a decision timeline and are unexpected. Flake was suffering in matchups that projected him against Ward in the primary and Sinema in the general. Subsequently, he left the race. Yet, retirements affect high-quality candidates more than low-quality candidates (King, 2017). In this case, Joe Arpaio, Kelli Ward, and other low-quality candidates will have a long shot whether or not the seat was open. However, the Flake's retirement gave McSally more certainty. Since she is giving up her current House seat to pursue the Senate seat, minimizing uncertainty is important. Typically, more candidates announce when a seat becomes open, and more candidates may continue to step forward before the May 30 filing deadline.

In addition, just because retirements cause chaos in the election does not mean they are without purpose. Flake understood that his feud with Trump would not bode well with Arizona voters, but his retirement was early in the timeline. Retiring early lessens speculation and helps the retiring member's party to recruit a candidate who would win. In Flake's case, his early retirement is meant to

help his party, but also the faction of his party. High-quality candidates will not usually leave their current station unless they have good reason. In this election, McSally and any other high-quality candidate after her will have good reason to announce. By giving a high-quality candidate the ability, this could disrupt the forecast of far-right candidates Ward and Arpaio and could potentially spit their conservative vote share.

5.2.3 Mississippi

Mississippi and Arizona are undoubtedly the most energetic races of the 2018 midterms. Four years ago, a clear Republican divide existed in Mississippi politics between mainstream Republicans and Tea Party groups. In the midterm election of 2014, this divide manifested itself in the form of state Senator Chris McDaniel challenging Thad Cochran in the Republican primary. Chris McDaniel lost that race narrowly, thanks to African American communities that voted for Thad Cochran in the runoff (Hood and McKee, 2017). Despite that race is four years in the past, the angst is still fresh in many voters' minds and the drama of this state's midterms took a turn when Thad Cochran announced his retirement from the chamber in March (Stolburg 2018).

Mississippi is regularly scheduled to hold its Senate election for 2018, and Thad Cochran's seat was not scheduled until 2020. However, Cochran announced in March that his resignation from the Senate would be April 1 due to complications in health. In this scenario, a special election must be scheduled along with the regularly scheduled election. In this analysis of candidate strategy and Senate races, there are two separate Senate races, but they are very much intertwined into one ordeal.

Mississippi was prepared to witness a competitive primary season before Thad Cochran announced retirement. Beforehand, incumbent Roger Wicker filed and essentially announced his bid for re-election in 2013, immediately after he won his 2012 campaign. In addition to making his re-election ambitions known before the

timeline began, Wicker engaged in behavior that is intended to deter competition. For example, he announced the support of 65 Mississippi Trump Campaign heads and touted an endorsement from Donald Trump. Another example is a poll he commissioned. The poll was conducted by Glen Blogger with Public Opinion Strategies. In that poll, Wicker was projected to beat Chris McDaniel among favorability, a head-to-head matchup, and among Tea Party supporters. However, the poll mentioned a name recognition variable concerning McDaniel at 78%, but no such figure was associated with Wicker.

The absence of Wicker's name recognition in the poll is no surprise. He likely maintains less name recognition than McDaniel for two reasons. One is that Wicker's hometown is Tupelo, MS. He represented the area in the state legislature, and in the U.S. House of Representatives. He is known throughout northern Mississippi but lacks the name recognition in the central and southern parts of the state. In those regions, McDaniel maintains high name recognition, especially near his hometown, Ellisville, MS. Secondly, Wicker falls in line with most Mississippi Senators; he was appointed and has never faced a competitive primary or election. Thus, he never truly campaigned statewide as he was re-elected in primary and general elections by comfortable margins. Therefore, Wicker makes credible threats with his record and endorsements to keep a challenger at home and save resources. However, McDaniel is an apparent threat in Mississippi because he nearly won a Senate seat held by Thad Cochran.

Since McDaniel lost his first Senate bid, his PAC, "Remember Mississippi" remained active and McDaniel himself casually dropped hints on his social media outlets of ambition to seek a higher office. Initially, he announced a candidacy decision against Roger Wicker in Mississippi's regularly scheduled election. Comically, Cochran announced his retirement shortly after McDaniel entered Wicker's race. With the retirement comes an appointment from the governor to fill the remainder of Cochran's term, and that appointee is usually expected to campaign in the special election to follow. In a quick turn of events, McDaniel switched races

before the governor named Cindy Hyde-Smith to fill Cochran's seat. Although this is the messiest Senate race of all the state's in this thesis, the turn of events sheds light on the strategy and tactics that candidates often employ, whether they are the incumbent or on the outside looking in.

Both of Mississippi's Senators drew positive utility from their strategy. In Wicker's scenario, he advertised his endorsement from the President and carefully chose poll information released by his campaign. In addition, his status allowed him to arrange multiple fundraisers with the goal of "shoring up his campaign account" (Harrison 2017). In addition to Wicker's strategy, Cochran also employed smart planning of his retirement. The filing deadline for the regularly scheduled race was on March 1, 2018. Chris McDaniel filed for election on February 28, only one day out from the deadline. In a quick turn of events, Cochran announced his retirement a week later, after McDaniel declared against Wicker. Strategically, Cochran tied McDaniel's hands and placing pressure on him should he choose to switch from Wicker's race to the open seat race. The same scenario happened in Arizona. For a high-quality candidate, Martha McSally delayed an announcement 73% into the timeline as she waited to see if John McCain would retire. The same strategy was unfolding in McDaniel's mind. Cochran's health was in question and he wanted the low-hanging fruit of an open seat Senate election. However, Cochran's strategic retirement effectively tied McDaniel's hands.

The regularly scheduled Senate primary contains Roger Wicker and Richard Boyanton, a southern Mississippi businessman. On the other hand, the special seat is a nonpartisan election in which the top two candidates enter a runoff if none receive a majority. To replace Cochran, the governor of Mississippi appointed Agriculture Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith. Immediately after the retirement, Mike Espy announced his high interest in the seat, and Chris McDaniel switched to the race prior to Hyde-Smith's appointment. Additionally, Tupelo mayor Jason Shelton entered the race. All these candidates and any others that enter before April 24 will compete in the same election. Although the race under consideration

is a special election, open seat elections gather more candidates and feature more potential candidates than elections with an incumbent presence (King, 2017). Although McDaniel nearly defeated Cochran in 2014, an open election is a lower hanging fruit that can save a campaign money and resources. Here are two charts that provide time scores for each Senate candidate in both elections. They are separate, but dependent of one another, especially given McDaniel’s ambition for higher office.

Table 4: Mississippi Senate

Candidate	Level of Experience	Time Score
Roger Wicker	Incumbent	0
Chris McDaniel	Low	100
Richard Boyanton	None	95

Table 5: Mississippi Senate Special

Candidate	Level of Experience	Time Score
Cindy Hyde-Smith	Incumbent	32
Chris McDaniel	Low	18
Mike Espy	High	0
Jason Shelton	Low	58

Using a timeline for the special election involves setting the beginning of the timeline on March 5, which is when Cochran announced retirement. The end date is established as April 24. Compared to other regularly scheduled races, the timeline is significantly shorter, but serves to illustrate McDaniel’s strategic ambition for the Senate. His score of 18 represents a quick change of heart that placed him in this race. Additionally, he announced transition before Hyde-Smith was announced as the replacement. By acting in this manner, he established presence early on and made himself the threshold that any further announce candidate must defeat. In addition, open seat elections are more crowded than elections with incumbents. Furthermore, special seat open elections are potentially more problematic because they are nonpartisan. Candidates only need the highest or second highest percentage to compete in a runoff. Therefore, a lower threshold could draw candidates into a race.

5.2.4 Nebraska

Deb Fischer is seeking her second term in the U.S. Senate. When she sought her first term in 2012, she aligned herself with the Tea Party by receiving an endorsement from conservative donor Club for Growth. Despite her conservative endorsements and positions, she was a target for Steve Bannon when he sought to oust incumbents from high office (Bradner 2017). Her situation is suggestive of many ultra-conservative voters' perceptions of lawmakers that are elected to federal office, regardless of Tea Party support prior to their swearing-in. While anti-Fischer sentiment does exist within the state, a high-quality challenger did not step forward into the primary pool. The most serious challenger to primary her is Todd Watson, only because he ran against Ben Sasse as an independent in 2014. Demographically, she is relatively safe against any challenger. Donald Trump won approximately 60% of Nebraska in the 2016 and Fischer voted with his agenda and preferences at a high rate.

Although she is safe, the anti-establishment angst directed towards her early in the timeline is suggestive of key features concerning the Tea Party movement. One feature is that the Tea Party itself has no official spokesman to the degree that the major political parties do. In fact, the Tea Party is symbolic of a spider web, in which no centralized point exists, but each connection bears weight (Foley, 2012). Upon Steve Bannon's removal from the administration, he selected members of Congress to target in the 2018 midterms. Deb Fischer made that list. However, she was a Tea Party candidate in her 2012 election. Bannon's targeting of her campaign is illustrative of the idea that the Tea Party and far-right campaigns are not focused into specific goals and that any recognized figure can speak for the movement. Thus said, no high-quality candidate entered the race. In addition to Fischer's financial campaign history, the Nebraska GOP chair said finding a candidate more conservative than Fischer would prove difficult.

In addition, Fisher took steps to front her campaign. Often, incumbents do not host an official announcement, like a challenger commonly does. They usually

decide on re-election long in advance and it is an assumption that they will run. By proofing her campaign early in the timeline, Fischer potentially reaffirmed her commitment to her state and deterred any would-be challenger with high name recognition. Below is a chart with the candidates. The filing deadline was on the first day of March.

Table 6: Nebraska Senate

Candidate	Level of Experience	Time Score
Deb Fischer	Incumbent	41
Jack Heidel	None	91
Dennis F. Macek	None	98
Jeffrey Lynn Stein	None	97
Todd Watson	None	77

Gathering the conservative credentials to best Fischer would be difficult, as best. Her record with Tea Party support and President Trump’s endorsement makes a primary challenge all the more difficult. To sum, her early entry and an announcement event cemented her lead in the primary, and likely the general election.

5.2.5 Nevada

Nevada is the only midterm election with an incumbent Republican Senator in a state Hillary Clinton won. The state is generally a toss-up state for all elections, as voters elected George W. Bush twice, and Barrack Obama twice. Dean Heller is the incumbent senator and was viewed as the Republican’s most at-risk senator. Heller became noticeable in the Senate when the health care debate ensued, especially after he voted against a repeal measure of the Affordable Care Act.

Heller drew one notable primary challenge from Danny Tarkanian, an attorney who ran for a Nevada Congressional district. In his own regard, Tarkanian is highly well know in Nevada politics and sports. Often, states feature a Reform Party candidate that runs in every election and never garners over one percent. Quite oppositely, Tarkanian has filed to run in seven elections since 2004. In half the elections, he represented the Republican party in the general election.

Additionally, Tarkanian was a high school sports star in Nevada and played on his father's team for three seasons at University of Nevada Las Vegas. Most recently, he filed to challenge Dean Heller in the 2018 primary and pledged to more firmly support Trump.

In most elections Tarkanian entered, he was perceived as the Tea Party candidate. If he did not earn Tea Parties' endorsements or support, he was viewed as the far-right candidate. In a JMC Analytics Poll from October, Tarkanian beat Heller 44% to 38%. Additionally, 500 Nevada Republicans gave 85% approval to Trump and 86% indicated a likeliness to support his endorsement in the primary. The primary consisted of Tarkanian and Heller, but Trump is effectively on the ballot in this primary, as well. During the health care debate to repeal the Affordable Care Act, Heller voted "No" against two versions of the repeal and replace measures. In doing so, he drew the ire of the President. He received a threat that continued "No" votes would cost him re-election in Nevada. Sensibly, Heller voted "Yes" on the "skinny repeal" that ultimately failed. He also voted to support the Republican tax plan supported by Trump.

Finding favor with the President led to an endorsement of Heller and a message to Tarkanian. By tweeting, Trump pushed Tarkanian to exit the Nevada Senate primary and enter the House seat he most previously sought. While Tarkanian was perceived as a threat to Heller, he was not projected to fare well against Jacky Rosen, the Democrat who will likely campaign in the general election. On the other side of the coin, Heller behaved strategically to earn support among the President, Nevada Republicans, and Nevada independent or centrist voters. Voting for the final repeal measure and tax reform measures earned Trump's support and endorsement. At the same time, voting "No" on other health measures is representative of Heller's strategy with Nevada voters that voted for Clinton. Clinton won the state by a two-point margin, and his Senate race may feature similar numbers. Heller secured Presidential favor and is appealing to moderate Nevada voters by playing to both sides. While this race is the prime example of

Presidential influence, the timing and strategy of candidacy decisions also merits attention.

Table 7: Nevada Senate

Candidate	Level of Experience	Time Score
Dean Heller	Incumbent	0
Danny Tarkanian	None	50
Sarah Gazala	none	57

Dean Heller is the incumbent in the primary, but similar to Roger Wicker’s campaign, there was no indication by his office, his campaign, or the media that a formal announcement was made for his 2018 bid. According to FEC filing reports, he filed a candidacy statement seven times ranging from September 2013 to October 2017. With each candidacy report, a new fundraising committee was designated, but there never was an announcement event. In starting his campaign early, he amassed over seven million dollars, more than any other office seeker in Nevada. Eventually, his campaign announced on March 9, 2018 that Heller had filed for re-election. On the other hand, Tarkanian announced his candidacy on Fox News on August 8, 2017 but never filed. The last candidate in the primary is Gazala. She is a special needs school teacher in the Las Vegas area. She too, announced early but did not file until March.

Interestingly, Nevada law only allows permits a candidate to file for a short period: between the first Monday in March and the second Friday following the Monday. Even though Tarkanian announced, he never filed due to President Trump’s insistence. Trump tweeted on the day of the qualifying deadline, March 16, 2018, for Tarkanian to withdraw and enter the House race he most previously sought in 2016. Even though the timing scores for the candidates align with their political experience, outside influence from other interested parties changes the dynamics.

5.2.6 Tennessee

The resignation of Senator Bob Corker rattled the cage in Tennessee’s Senate race. Not only has the resignation created a blank space in the Republican primary, but former governor Phil Bredesen is campaigning on the Democratic side. Here, a primary candidate must take into account who they will face in the general election more than ever, given Bredesen’s high name recognition. Having the power to win the primary is fruitless if the general election is not winnable (Boatright, 2013). Initially, Tennessee’s open race drew a crowded Republican field and speculation from the current governor, Bill Haslam. However, the Tennessee Republican Party significantly winnowed the primary field. Citing bylaws that govern who may seek the Republican nomination, the party removed seven candidates from the ballot who did not vote in three of the previous four Republican primaries. As a result, three Republicans are left in the race and only one maintains significant political experience. Marsha Blackburn currently represents the Franklin area in the U.S. House of Representatives. Although her time score is somewhat later for a high-quality challenger, she strategically waited to see if Haslam would declare for the seat. Below are the candidates’ announcement times.

Table 8: Tennessee Senate

Candidate	Level of Experience	Time Score
Marsha Blackburn	High	60
Stephen Fincher	High	64
Larry Crim	None	0
Tommy Hay	None	87
Darrell Lynn	None	97
Ronaldo Toyos	None	65
Aaron Pettigrew	None	42
Steven Hughes	None	66

Of all Senate primary races in the midterms, Tennessee witnesses the highest level of candidate interaction and the strategy that follows. Corker did not announce his retirement until September 26, 2017 (Ebert 2017), which corresponds to a score of 58. By remaining in the race that late, he forced Fincher and Blackburn to wait. However, if politicians are truly ambitious they would naturally

seek an office unhindered by their obstacles and only fueled by ambition. Corker's retirement says just the opposite. First, Blackburn and Fincher know they face an uphill battle if they declared against Corker. At the end of 2017, his FEC reports indicate six million dollars at his disposal. Additionally, he maintains every advantage of an incumbent. Even though Blackburn and Fincher were ambitious for the Senate, they could not possibly declare early, no matter their political experience.

Secondly, this example demonstrates how a candidate's political experience is not all-telling and that strategy may not always align with years in office. King proposes that high-quality candidates should declare early in the timeline as a deterrence towards other high-quality candidates (2017). However, if Blackburn and Fincher declared before Corker's retirement announcement, they would have propelled themselves into an uncertain and unstable environment. Granted, getting the name and candidacy out early is valuable for polling and monetary purposes, but the interaction with Corker's retirement suggests candidates value certainty and stability just as equally.

Tennessee's race also became heated when Corker second-guessed his retirement for a short period (Everett 2018). Even though Blackburn and Fincher declared candidacy after Corker announced retirement, this goes to show that stability is never guaranteed. Initial general election polling revealed Bredesen defeating Blackburn by a small margin, which prompted individuals and groups to court Corker on reconsidering (Collins and Ebert, 2018). If he did enter the race, he would likely need the President's support. Yet again, Trump is a player in the election. In late 2016, harsh rhetoric was exchanged between Corker and Trump, and Corker subsequently saw his favorability decrease in Tennessee. When Corker reconsidered retirement, Blackburn's campaign took steps to increase prominence and rhetoric. Responding to a potential loss to Bredesen, Blackburn's campaign staff said, "Anyone who thinks Marsha Blackburn can't win in a general election is just a plain sexist pig" (Savransky 2018). Additionally, Blackburn commissioned

polls that provided leads over Corker and Fincher, as well as securing endorsements from numerous Tennessee politicians. As for Fincher, he withdraws from the race upon realizing the sizable funding and polling leads Blackburn maintained. When he withdrew, he publicly suggested for Corker to reverse his choice on retirement.

Concerning Republican dimensions, Blackburn maintains a Tea Party presence and is unique in the context of this race. Most Tea Party and far-right candidates are “outsiders looking in”; that is what makes them challengers. However, Blackburn is currently a sitting House member. To date she is supported by Club for Growth and the Senate Conservative Fund. She is well received by Trump and served on his transition team. She is one of few candidates that is endorsed by Tea Party groups but will not fight for the nomination in the primary. To the contrary, Bredesen is a well-known opponent despite his political party.

To sum, retirements from the Senate matter tremendously. Blackburn, Fincher, and Bredesen were and are candidates only because Corker announced retirement. Therefore, retirements, especially if strategic and not expected, change the slate of candidates available to a voter on election day. Clearly, Blackburn and Fincher were ambitious for the Senate because they announced soon after the retirement. But the retirement cleared any doubts out of mind and amplified their chances of winning on election day, creating a link between retiring members and optimization of opportunity.

5.2.7 Utah

Throughout most elections, Utah voted as a reliably conservative state. Orrin Hatch was re-elected several times and the Tea Party supported Mike Lee when he first sought the Senate. Despite Lee’s election, Utah voters maintain a disdain for nationalism driven politics. In the 2016 presidential election, Trump only won a plurality, 46%. Part of this stems from Evan McMullen’s presence in Utah. However, one could argue that Utah’s suspicion of nationalism creates the ideal environment for a third-party candidate to receive over 20% of the popular vote.

Utah's distinct political identity coupled with an open seat election provides an insight into an interesting state.

Utah uses a unique primary system. Most parties allow qualified candidates to run in their primary election, and the top two candidates will compete in a run-off if none gain a majority in the first round. However, Utah's system is focused on the convention and signature method. To select the primary candidate for Senate, the voters caucus and select delegates for a state convention. If a primary candidate receives 60% of delegate votes, they are the party's nominee and no primary is held. If no candidate receives 60%, then the top two candidates will compete on the primary ballot. There is also an alternative route to getting on the primary ballot. If a candidate can collect 28,000 signatures, that will automatically place them on the ballot, regardless of what happens at the convention. Therefore, if a candidate can gather signatures, they will force a primary if someone at the convention wins 60% ("How Elections Work in Utah"). When filing for office, candidates must indicate what channel they will choose, and may pursue both the convention method and signature method.

Originally, Orrin Hatch said in 2012 that should he win, he would not seek another term in the Senate. To the contrary, he told the press on March 9, 2017 that he was planning on running in 2018 (Romboy, 2017). Trump wished for him to continue with a Senate bid, but Hatch ultimately announced his retirement on January 2, 2018. Some polls indicated that approximately 75% of Utah voters wished for Hatch to retire, while preferring Romney as the replacement (Davidson, 2017). On the one hand, Hatch retired for fear of losing and on the other, he is 83 years old and forty-one years in the Senate is almost half a century. Regardless of what prompted him to retire, the timing of his retirement announcement merits attention. He announced at 84 percent of the Utah Senate timeline. That is a very late announcement for an incumbent who is presumably concerned with his party's majority status.

Late retirements can serve a purpose. By waiting until the filing deadline is

closer, a later retirement decision gives the opposition party less time to organize (King, 2017, 144). But in Utah’s political context, the Democrats are not a threat. The threat could only come from a challenger with Utah’s Republican Party. No candidate, even a high-quality candidate like Romney, could have effectively organized so long as Hatch remained in a race. By delaying retirement, Hatch warded off the current slate of candidates and game them less time to organize and gather signatures. Effectively, Hatch made Romney’s entrance into the race easier. Romney was already rumored to run if Hatch retired. When Romney entered the race, he usurped the media and attention away from anyone else who would later announce. Politicians enjoy a stable environment, and Hatch’s late announcement created instability by delayed the announcements of other Senate hopefuls. However, whether intentional or not, the retirement announcement timing worked in Romney’s favor by giving him frontrunner status as soon as he entered.

Table 9: Utah Senate

Candidate	Level of Experience	Time Score
Orrin Hatch	Incumbent	84
Mitt Romney	High	94
Mike Kennedy	Low	98
Larry Meyers	Low	84
Loy Brunson	Low	100
Sam Parker	None	95
Torrey Jenkins	None	100
Tim Jimerez	None	88
Jeremy Friedbaum	None	99
Stoney Fonua	None	99
Alicia Colvin	None	98
Jay Hiatt	None	84
Joshua Lee	None	99
Brian Jenkins	None+	99

Hatch’s retirement generated the most excitement over an open seat, although most of the candidates have no elected experience. Yet, it shows that individuals are more likely to set aside the time to file at a courthouse and sometimes pay a fee. The only serious challenge Romney may encounter is from Mike Kennedy, who is a member of Utah’s state legislature. Romney commonly receives attacks

concerning his residence. He was previously the governor of Massachusetts before the 2012 presidential nomination and has lived in Utah for several years. But most candidates have used the “he’s not a Utahan“ at some point. Most notably, the Utah GOP chairman tore into Romney but saying that Romney has not lived his life in Utah, his kids were not born in Utah, and that he does not shop in Utah.

The attacks do not appear to damage Romney. Romney is the only candidate to submit 28,000 signatures, which guarantees a spot on the primary ballot. In addition, he will still take the convention route which permits that 60% of delegate support will bestow the nomination unless another candidate gets 28,000 signatures (Craft, 2018). Although Romney criticized Trump during the 2016 election, Trump still extended an endorsement. Demographically, Utah is an ideal state for Romney’s Senate campaign because he finds favor with the Mormon population. Even before he settled to live in Utah, Utahans favored Romney in the 2012 presidential election and he was favored in polls that included Orrin Hatch and Jennifer Wilson, the Democrat in the race. The most characteristic feature of this race was the strategic timing of Hatch’s retirement that delayed all other announcements. Candidates are ambitious for public office, but they are often not willing to reveal that ambition if the environment is uncertain.

5.2.8 West Virginia

West Virginia is a state won by Donald Trump in 2016 that contains a Democratic incumbent. As expected, Republicans stepped forward to challenge Joe Manchin. In doing so, they are representative of primary strategy; candidates are highly mindful of who they will face in the general election, notwithstanding the difficulty or ease of the primary phase (King, 2017). West Virginia is known as “coal country“ and many issues that surround coal drive politics and behavior. Ultimately, the challengers on the Republican side stepped forward due to the partisan difference between Manchin and Trump.

The state’s primary has one of the darkest backgrounds of all midterms. In

2010, the Upper Big Branch mine explosion occurred, killing 29 miners. Massey Energy was heavily fined for violating safety standards and Don Blankenship, the then CEO of Massey, was convicted of conspiring to willfully violate safety standards and sentenced to one year in jail. Prior to that, he established a PAC to oust a sitting WV Supreme Court justice and elect one that would be more favorable to Massey's cases. He purchased justices and then tried to buy a legislature. He broke the backs of unions and destroyed their contracts. He started the "war on coal" narrative and is in part responsible for the Republican shift in West Virginia (Brown and Bowlin, 2018). John Grisham wrote a book about West Virginia's political drama, titled *The Appeal*. The coal industry has a dark and sometimes horrifying history. Blankenship arguably represents every negative aspect of the story and he is currently seeking the high office of Senator.

The two other significant candidates in the race are Evan Jenkins and Patrick Morrisey. Jenkins is currently a U.S. House member from West Virginia and was a Democrat until 2013. Morrisey is the state's attorney general. Throughout much of the race, these two candidates have exchanged fire towards each other, while not criticizing Blankenship. Blankenship recently missed a financial disclosure deadline (Robillard, 2018), so the exact amount of funds available is unknown, but likely plentiful. Both Morrisey and Jenkins commissioned polls showing their own self in the lead, with Blankenship two points behind. They are likely unwilling to directly attack Blankenship over fear that he would receive more attention and thereby contrast himself as the outsider and the other two as "establishment." In West Virginia's Senate race, a set of candidates are high-quality challengers and others that served and participated in politics are low-quality or inexperienced candidates.

Except for one, candidates lacking experience are announcing in the latter half of the timeline. Oppositely, Morrisey and Jenkins announced early relative to their competitors. For them, they each announced early out of necessity to appeal to Trump and closely align their record with his. Concerning inexperienced

Table 10: West Virginia Senate

Candidate	Level of Experience	Time Score
Evan Jenkins	High	32
Patrick Morrisey	High	49
Don Blankenship	None	85
Tom Willis	None	94
Bo Copley	None	31
Jack NewBrough	None	68

candidates, Blankenship is an exception to the standard. Most unexperienced politicians are without significant campaign funds and lack the name recognition to barely achieve 1% in an election. However, some of these candidates are wealthy and able to blare attack ads. Sometimes, they are well-known in business or a sphere outside of politics. Nonetheless, these candidates can pose a credible threat to the mainstream political order. Look no further than the White House.

5.2.9 Wyoming

At one point in Wyoming, Steve Bannon was calling for a challenger to incumbent John Barrasso. The only two candidates that received any attention from him or the media were Erik Prince and Foster Friess. Prince was a Navy SEAL and is the founder of a government security and service firm called Academi. More importantly, he is Betsy DeVos' brother. Friess is a businessman and large donor to Christian causes. To date, neither stepped forward as a challenger and Barrasso is the only Republican in the primary unless another candidate joins by June 5, 2018.

There is a challenger, even though he is not running in the Republican primary. Dave Dodson is a former CEO for a Jackson, Wyoming based company and an adjunct professor at the Stanford School of Business. On his campaign website, he argues that the primary system only exists as a way to protect incumbents. Therefore, he argues, he must force Barrasso to campaign statewide in the general election to keep his chances from getting smashed by party bosses within the GOP (Dodson, 2018). Currently, Dodson has a website and is largely able to self-finance

his campaign; he said on record he can provide one million dollars and potentially more (Dovere, 2018). In the chart, Barrasso and Dodson’s timeline score are listed, despite Dodson’s absence in the primary.

Table 11: Wyoming Senate

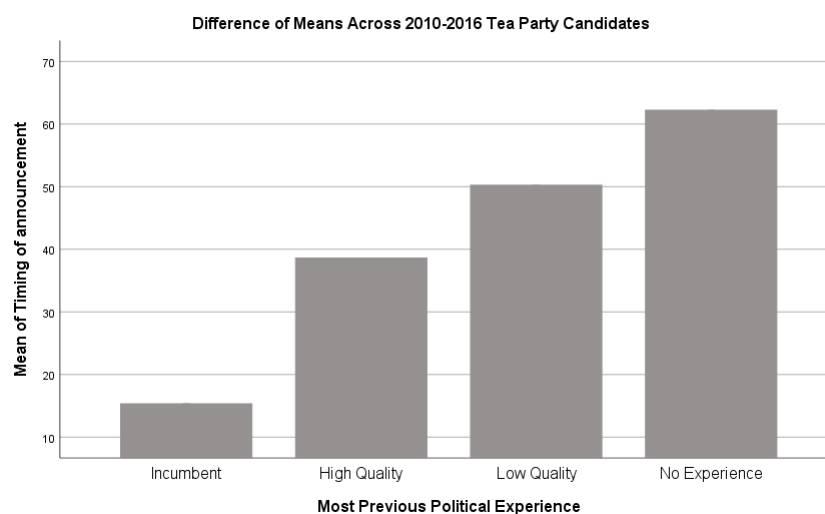
Candidate	Level of Experience	Time Score
John Barrasso	Incumbent	0
Dave Dodson(I)	None	80

6 Data and Analysis

6.1 Difference of Means

Before I delve into the data and framework that deal with the hypotheses, I want to give an overview of the two variables on a comparison level. Starting with Tea Party candidates from 2010-2016, Figure 2 shows a difference of means test between a candidate's most previous political experience and the timing of announcement. Incumbents have the earliest average of candidacy announcements, with the subsequent categories becoming later into the overall timeline. This figure therefore gives evidence of higher political experience translating into an earlier entry into a race for the Senate.

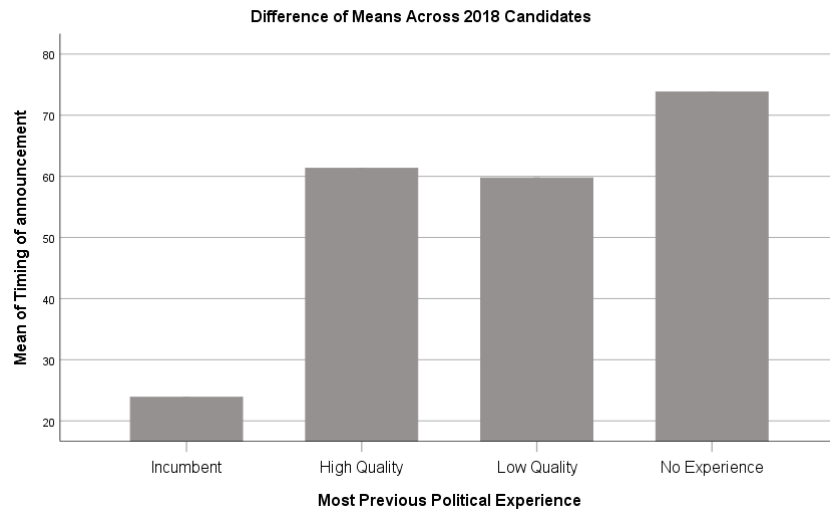
Figure 2: Average Announcement Rates in the Tea Party Primaries by Experience



It should also be noted that a one-way ANOVA analysis gives more validity to the relationship in the graph by providing a significant F statistic of 5.522 at

significance of .002 p-value. The next chart, Figure 3, shows the same difference of means results for 2018 Republican candidates.

Figure 3: Average Announcement Rates in the 2018 Primaries

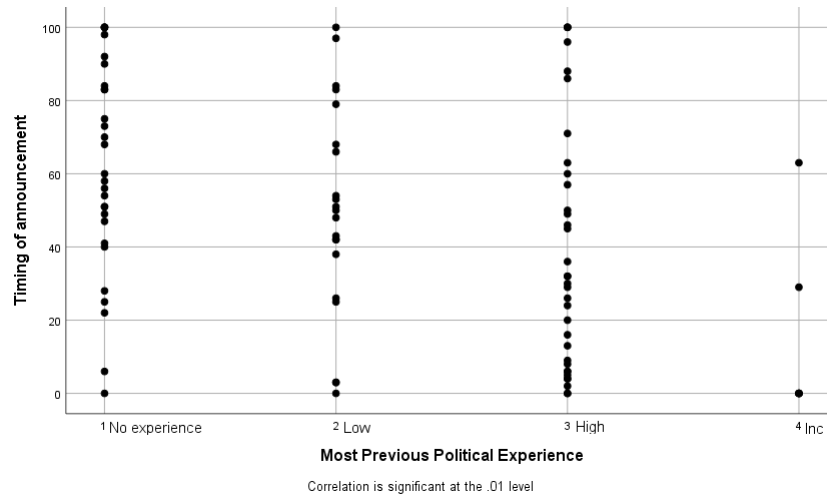


The only unexpected outcome in Figure 3 is that on average, high quality candidates declared later than low quality candidates among Republicans in select states. An ANOVA analysis provides a significant F statistic of 6.301 at a significance of .001 p-value. Since the high quality candidates were later than low quality candidates, there is a possibility that Bannon-fuel activity and retiring members are keeping candidates across all levels from announcing earlier.

6.2 Hypotheses Concerning Tea Party Candidates

Hypothesis 1a: As Tea Party candidates' most previous political experience increases, their timing of announcement will decrease, or be earlier in the timeline.

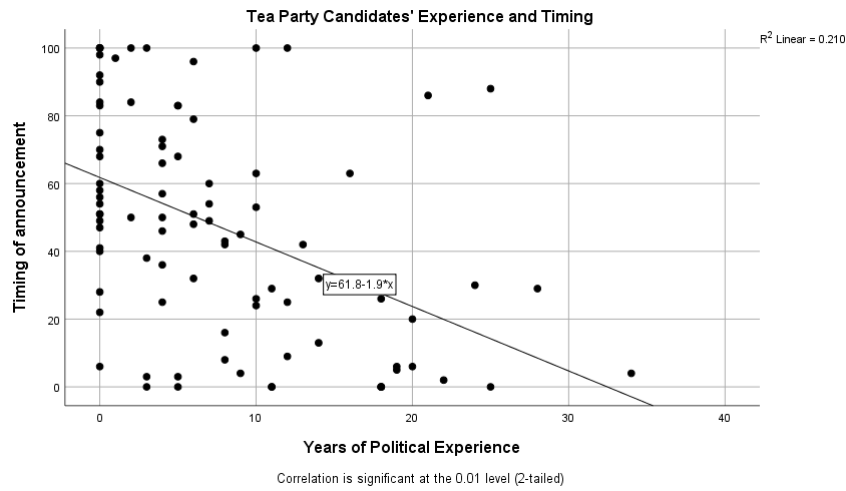
Figure 4: Timing and Political Experience in the Tea Party Primaries



In my hypothesis, I estimated that as a Tea Party candidate becomes more politically experienced, their timing of announcement will be earlier in the timeline, or decrease. The independent variable, political experience, is expressed as the category of the most previous office held, as described in Table 1. The Spearman's Rho analysis reveals a significant correlation between the two variables, in line with my hypothesis with a coefficient value of $-.392$ and p-value of less than $.001$ in a 0.01 confidence interval. From this data, we can say that Tea Party candidates from 2010 to 2016 made their announcement earlier if they previously held a statewide office or were an incumbent; and made their choices later if they lacked experience or previously served at the state or local level. Accordingly, these candidates behaved with ambition in mind, since high quality candidates are suggested to announce early and lower quality candidates later (King 2017: 29).

Hypothesis 1b: As Tea Party candidates' years of political experience increases, their timing of announcement decreases, or becomes earlier.

Figure 5: Timing and Years of Experience in the Tea Party Primary Efforts



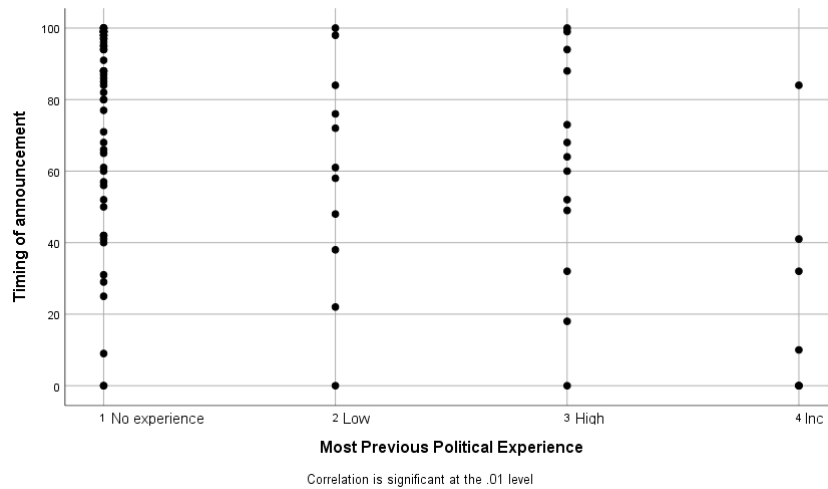
I was interested in this specific hypothesis because the number of years is more fixed than the ordinal level scale in hypothesis 1a. So this different expression in the independent variable tells me how much experience, and not just where they are politically. After using a Pearson's analysis to correlate the two variables, a negative correlation of $- .458$ was yielded. The coefficient is significant at the .01 confidence interval with a p-value of .001. Hypothesis 1b then stands, as timing of announcements is decreasing (becoming earlier) as political years increase.

Gauging from the coefficient, years of political experience seem to be the better measure of when candidates declare for the Senate. First, the independent variable was defined as more inclusive than only elected office. This variable includes any political behavior that could be conducive to a candidate's name recognition. Some candidates in the data set had no elected experience but maintained several years of campaign experience. On the other hand, years of experience could be misleading. Politicians usually do not spend fifteen or twenty years in one low quality office. They are often progressively ambitious (King 2017: 10, Boatright 2013: 52). Public office is established as a pyramid with high quality offices near the top. So, high quality candidates may be hidden within the candidates that have the most years of political experience.

6.3 Hypotheses Concerning 2018 Republican Candidates

Hypothesis 2a: As 2018 Republicans' political experience increases, their timing of announcement decreases, becomes earlier.

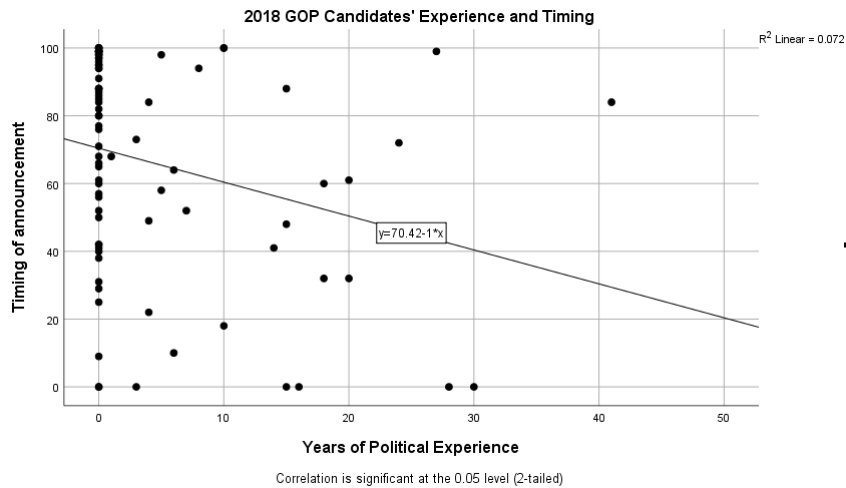
Figure 6: Timing and Political Experience in the 2018 Primaries



This hypothesis estimates that timing of announcement will decrease, or be earlier, as political experience on the four-level scale increases. A correlation of $-.345$ was yielded after correlating the variables using a Spearman's Rho test. The coefficient is significant at the .01 confidence interval and p-value of .001. This suggests that Republican candidates in Bannon threat-level races are declaring for candidacy with regard to their level of experience as outlined by King. The the only difference in Hypothesis 1a is that the correlation is weaker when among all Republican candidates, which gives evidence that candidates could be more hesitant with regard to the primary threat. Due to the presence of candidates in 2018 midterms who have no experience and waited until the filing day to announce (score of 100), I did not expect to find that level of coefficient.

Hypothesis 2b: As 2018 Republicans' years of political experience increase, their timing of announcement decreases, or becomes earlier.

Figure 7: Timing and Years of Experience in the 2018 Primaries



This hypothesis projected that candidates with more years of experience will announce sooner. Pearson’s correlation yielded a $-.268$ coefficient with a $.05$ confidence interval with a p-value of $.014$. As in the previous hypothesis, this coefficient does not correlate as strongly as its political years counterpart in Hypothesis 1b. The correlation shows that the hypothesis is true and that more years of experience leads to an earlier announcement. But, the correlation could again be weaker due to Bannon’s threats and retiring members. The slope of the fit line in the figure is slightly negative and heavily dotted on the low experience, late entry area. This is likely due to many candidates in the 2018 select states that file for office on the last day. Candidates of this nature commonly outnumber serious candidates and their later entry only pushes the overall timeline back. In addition, there may not be enough candidates announced in the 2018 Republican primaries to make up for the high number of “100” score candidates that enter into races.

In addition, an area of further research with regard to this hypothesis is the retirements of sitting senators. The Senate races in Utah, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arizona were all affected by a retirement or the potential of a retirement. The final two hypotheses may not have correlated as strongly due to the uncertainty an incumbent creates when retirement is a possibility.

7 Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to determine if political experience correlated with a candidate's timing of a candidacy announcement. By itself, an announcement decision is just another news article, but that point in a campaign is capable of setting the pace for the remainder of the trail. Strategically, candidates that want more funds and better chances of success will announce earlier, but some candidates do not. Given that not all candidates announce at a common time, and that more experienced candidates should announce earlier and lower quality candidates should announce later, I was interested to know if this idea held true in far right, Tea Party conservative politics of the pre-Trump era and of today's Bannon-backed candidates. This thesis began by tracing the Tea Party's electoral history across a six-year period. In doing so, the Tea Party impacted Republican politics by using the primary election as its principle mechanism. While the candidates they ran were often met with defeat, their demand for change within the party and its candidates elicited a response from mainstream Republican leaders and the movement also generated a competition and conflict.

Overall, the Tea party generated great feats of energy and was a driving force within Republican politics for some time, as they took back the House and were a constant antagonizing group in primary elections. Through all of the momentum, however, the Tea Party was never a unified force within American politics and was often separated into several large organizations that were conservative at the end of the day, but largely spoke for themselves. Approval and electability sharply decreased in 2014, and the large Tea Party organizations hardly fielded candidates in 2016.

In the past year, Steve Bannon has promised that no candidate is safe and that he is willing to primary centrist Republicans and use his candidates to oust vulnerable Democrats. Taking into account his threats and far right thread that continues with him, select state from 2018 were also examined along with elections from Tea Party elections.

The variables examined in the work are qualities that are central to a candidate and the chances of election. After a lengthy analysis of the Tea Party midterms and the upcoming midterms, I observed how important money and resources are to any movement. Large groups financed the Tea Party during the movement's energetic period and Steve Bannon recently pushed for more conservative individuals to step forward. Ambitious individuals must step forward, and I discovered through the literature that the time at which a candidate announces his campaign is highly important. Furthermore, I was interested in testing the correlation of experience on ambition. Through the gathering of several datasets and research on individual conservative politicians, I tested the idea that political experience will dictate when a candidate announces a run for the Senate, or to put it directional, that candidates' timing of announcement will decrease (earlier entry) as their experience increases.

I found that political experience negatively correlated with the timing of announcement during the Tea Party's strong midterm elections, and also currently as we look to the 2018 midterm elections. In addition to the hypotheses that stood, I also saw other angles of American politics that likely had an effect on my thesis. One such effect is that of retiring members of the Senate. Candidates want an easy way to the Senate and waiting to see who will retire is important, but also slows down the entire process by pushing announcement times towards 100. Potential candidates often waited until the incumbent announced retirement before they would announce for the open seat. Strategic retirements are definitely an avenue for further research as it relates to ambitious individuals that seek the Senate and other high office.

This research project touched on several areas of conservative politics and the ambition that propels people to those goals and allowed for a few simple assumptions to receive much deeper attention and research, from mapping out a candidacy timeline to learning about individual office seekers. Although adding to the work on candidate assessment and Tea Party history was never the goal of this project, the conclusion that political experience does impact when an ambitious individual makes herself known to the public may help to encourage others to think about elections and the impact they have on us. Regardless, the desires of far right groups in America, like Steve Bannon, pose a thought provoking juxtaposition to the idea of compromise that many legislators and citizens value, and the contrast becomes an more salient topic considering where we are politically as a nation.

8 List of References

- Bash, Dana. (2015, September 25). House Speaker John Boehner: 'I decided today is the day'. *CNN*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnn.com/2015/09/25/politics/john-boehner-resigning-as-speaker/index.html>
- Boatright, Robert G. (2014). *Congressional Primary Elections*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bradner, Eric. (2017, October 9). Bannon expands his list of Senate Republican targets for 2018. *CNN*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/08/politics/steve-bannon-senate-races/index.html>
- Brown, Dylan and Bowlin, Nick. (2018, April 10). Why Don Blankenship Still Matters. *E and E News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.eenews.net/stories/>
- Campbell, David E., and Putman, Robert P. (2011, August 17). Crashing the Tea Party. *New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/17/opinion/crashing-the-tea-party.html?mtrref=undefinedandgwh>
- Craft, Andrew (2018, March 23). GOP candidates line up to take on Romney in Utah Senate race. *Fox News*. Retire GOP candidates line up to take on Romney in Utah Senate received from: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2018/03/23/gop-candidates-line-up-to-take-on-romney-in-utah-senate-race.html>
- Davidson, Lee. (2017, October 19). Poll: Utahns say Orrin Hatch shouldn't run again, but Mitt Romney should. *Salt Lake Tribune*. Retrieved from: <https://www.sltrib.com/news/politics/2017/10/19/poll-utahns-say-orrin-hatch-shouldnt-run-again-but-mitt-romney-should/>
- Deckman, Melissa. (2017). Faith and the Free Market: Evangelicals, the Tea Party, and Economic Attitudes. *Politics and Religion*, 10, 82-110.
- Dodson, Dave. (2018). Candidate site. Retrieved from: <https://www.dodsonforsenate.com/>
- Dovere, Edward-Issac (2018, February 22). Wyoming's Barrasso draws independent challenger. *Politico*. Retrieved from: <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/22/barrasso-wyoming-independent-unite-america-421648>
- Ebert, Joel. (2017, October 5). Why Gov. Bill Haslam won't run *The Tennessean*.

- Retrieved from: <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2017/10/05/bill-haslam-announces-us-senate-decision/732198001/>
- Everett, Burgess. (2018, February 27). Corker decides against reelection bid, sticks with retirement. *Politico*. Retrieved from: <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/27/corker-tennessee-senate-retirement-midterms-423573>
- Fenno, Richard F., Jr. (1996). *Senators on the Campaign Trail*. Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Foley, Elizabeth Price. 2012. *The Tea Party: Three Principles*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Fowler, Linda L. (1993). *Candidates, Congress, and the American Democracy*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Fox, Lauren. (2014, May 13). Nebraska Tea Party in Disarray Ahead of Senate Primary. *U.S. News and World Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/05/13/nebraskas-senate-primary-provides-a-portrait-of-a-tea-party-divided>
- Greenberg, Stanley B. Special Report on the Tea Party Movement. *Democracy Corps*. <http://www.democracycorps.com/National-Surveys/special-report-on-the-tea-party-movement/>. 19 July, 2010.
- Grevin, Thomas. (2016). The Rise of Right-wing Populism in Europe and the United States. *Friedrich, Ebert, Stiftung*, 28.
- Harrison, Bobby. (2017, August 1). Wicker has strong fund-raising effort for re-election bid. *MS Business Journal*. Retrieved from: <http://msbusiness.com/2017/08/wicker-strong-fund-raising-effort-re-election-bid/>
- Hood, M.V., III, Kidd, Quentin, and Morris, Irwin L. (2015). Tea Leaves and Southern Politics: Explaining Tea Party Support in the Region. *Social Science Quarterly*, 96, 923-940.
- Hood, M.V., III, and McKee, Seth C. (2017). Black Votes Count: The 2014 Republican Senate Nomination in Mississippi. *Social Science Quarterly*, 98, 89-106.

- How Elections Work in Utah. Action Utah. Retrieved from: <http://www.actionutah.org/how-elections-work-in-utah/>
- Kamisar, Ben. (2015, November 9). Tea Party skips incumbent challenges. *The Hill*. Retrieved from: <http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/259431-tea-party-skipping-senate-incumbent-challenges>
- King, Aaron S. (2017). *Unfolding Ambition in Senate Primary Elections*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Lloyd, Mark. (2011). Why the Left will Never Understand the Tea Party,” Tea Party Review, 1, p. 7
- Moore, Lori. (2012, August 20). Rep. Todd Akin: The Statement and the Reaction. *New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/21/us/politics/rep-todd-akin-legitimate-rape-statement-and-reaction.html>
- Perlberg, Steven. (2014, February 19). Rick Santelli Started The Tea Party With A Rant Exactly 5 Years Ago Today — Here’s How He Feels About It Now. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from: <http://www.businessinsider.com/rick-santelli-tea-party-rant-2014-2>
- Robillard, Kevin. (2018, March 26). GOP Leans on Party-Switchers to Keep Senate. *Politico*. <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/03/26/republicans-senate-former-democrats-444831>
- Romboy, Dennis. (2017, March 9). Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch planning to run for eighth term. *Deseret News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/865675230/Utah-Sen-Orrin-Hatch-planning-to-run-for-eighth-term.html>
- Savransky, Rebecca. (2018, February 13). Blackburn campaign: Anyone who doubts she can win is a ‘plain sexist pig’. *ABC*. Retrieved from: <http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/373613-blackburn-campaign-anyone-who-doubts-she-can-win-is-a-plain-sexist-pig>
- Skopol, Theda, and Williamson, Vanessa (2012). *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Stolburg, Sheryl. (2018, March 5). Senator Thad Cochran Announces Retirement

- ment, Opening Another G.O.P. Seat. *New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/05/us/politics/thad-cochran-retire-senate.html>
- Weaver, Al. (2018, January 18). Martha McSally: Lawmakers are 'dicking around' on immigration deal. *Washington Examiner*. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/martha-mcsally-lawmakers-are-dicking-around-on-immigration-deal>
- Wilson, Angela R., and Burack, Cynthia. (2012). "Where Liberty Reigns and God is Supreme": The Christian Right and the Tea Party Movement. *New Political Science*, 2, 172-190.